

What is claimed is:

1. A transmission apparatus for transmitting digital content data via a communication medium, comprising:

attachment means for attaching cost information per unit data volume to said digital content data; and

transmission means for transmitting said digital content data attached with said cost information after converting a data format of said digital content data attached with said cost information into a data format suitable to said communication medium.

2. The transmission apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said attachment means attaches, as said cost information, at least one of a unit price of said unit data volume and attribute information of said digital content data thereto.

3. The transmission apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

division means for dividing said digital content data into predetermined unit data volumes.

4. The transmission apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

notification means for notifying a management unit of transmission information about said digital content

data transmitted by said transmission means.

5. The transmission apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said notification means notifies said management unit of, as transmission information about said digital content data transmitted by said transmission means, at least one of said cost information, information for identifying a sender, information for identifying a recipient, and a data volume of said digital content data transmitted.

6. A transmission method for transmitting digital content data via a communication medium, comprising the steps of:

attaching cost information per unit data volume to said digital content data; and

transmitting said digital content data attached with said cost information after converting a data format of said digital content data attached with said cost information into a data format suitable to said communication medium.

7. A recording medium recording a computer-readable program for transmitting digital content data via a communication medium, said computer-readable program comprising the steps of:

attaching cost information per unit data volume to

said digital content data; and

transmitting said digital content data attached with said cost information after converting a data format of said digital content data attached with said cost information into a data format suitable to said communication medium.

8. A reception apparatus for receiving digital content data transmitted via a communication medium, comprising:

reception means for receiving said digital content with its data format converted into a data format suitable for said communication medium and restoring the received digital content data;

removal means for removing said cost information from the restored digital content data; and

reproduction means for reproducing said digital content data deprived of said cost information.

9. The reception apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising:

notification means for notifying a management unit of reception information about said digital content data received by said reception means.

10. The reception apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said notification means notifies, as said

reception information about said digital content data received by said reception means, at least one of said cost information, information for identifying a sender, information for identifying a recipient, and a data volume of said received digital content data.

11. A reception method for receiving digital content data transmitted via a communication medium, comprising the steps of:

receiving said digital content with its data format converted into a data format suitable for said communication medium and restoring the received digital content data;

removing said cost information from the restored digital content data; and

reproducing said digital content data deprived of said cost information.

12. A recording medium recording a computer-readable program for receiving digital content data transmitted via a communication medium, said computer-readable program comprising the steps of:

receiving said digital content with its data format converted into a data format suitable for said communication medium and restoring the received digital content data;

removing said cost information from the restored digital content data; and

reproducing said digital content data deprived of said cost information.

13. A management apparatus for managing purchase and sale of digital content data transmitted from a transmission unit and received by a reception unit via a communication medium, comprising:

reception means for receiving at least one of transmission information and reception information about said digital content data from a given point on a communication route between said transmission unit and said reception unit inclusive; and

computation means for computing, on the basis of at least one of said transmission information and said reception information received by said reception means, a sale price of said digital content data via said communication medium.

14. The management apparatus according to claim 13, further comprising:

transmission means for transmitting information about the sale price of said digital content data computed by said computation means to a charging unit.

15. The management apparatus according to claim 13,

wherein said computation means computes the sale price of said digital content data via said communication medium by multiplying cost information included in said reception information received by said reception means by a data volume of said received digital content data.

16. A management method for managing purchase and sale of digital content data transmitted from a transmission unit and received by a reception unit via a communication medium, comprising the steps of:

receiving at least one of transmission information and reception information about said digital content data from a given point on a communication route between said transmission unit and said reception unit including the both; and

computing, on the basis of at least one of said transmission information and said reception information received in said reception step, a sale price of said digital content data via said communication medium.

17. A recording medium recording a computer-readable program for managing purchase and sale of digital content data transmitted from a transmission unit and received by a reception unit via a communication medium, said computer-readable program comprising the steps of:

receiving at least one of transmission information and reception information about said digital content data from a given point on a communication route between said transmission unit and said reception unit including the both; and

computing, on the basis of at least one of said transmission information and said reception information received in said reception step, a sale price of said digital content data via said communication medium.

18. A charging apparatus for charging for digital content data attached with cost information per unit data volume transmitted from a transmission unit to a reception unit via a communication medium, comprising:

acquisition means for acquiring a sale price of said digital content data on the basis of said cost information per unit data volume; and

charging means for charging a user of said reception apparatus on the basis of said sale price acquired by said acquisition means.

19. The charging apparatus according to claim 18, wherein said acquisition means acquires said sale price along with a usage fee for using said communication medium and said charging means charges said sale price along with said usage fee further comprises:

distribution means for dividing an amount of money paid by said user of said reception unit into a portion covering said sale price and another covering said usage fee.

20. A charging method for charging for digital content data attached with cost information per unit data volume transmitted from a transmission unit to a reception unit via a communication medium, comprising the steps of:

acquiring a sale price of said digital content data on the basis of said cost information per unit data volume; and

charging a user of said reception apparatus on the basis of said sale price acquired in said acquisition step.

21. A recording medium recording a computer-readable program for charging for digital content data attached with cost information per unit data volume transmitted from a transmission unit to a reception unit via a communication medium, said computer-readable program comprising the steps of:

acquiring a sale price of said digital content data on the basis of said cost information per unit data volume; and



charging a user of said reception apparatus on the basis of said sale price acquired in said acquisition step.

22. A charging apparatus for charging for digital content data transmitted from a transmission unit to a reception unit via a communication medium, comprising:

acquisition means for acquiring information about a sale price of said digital content data;

synthesis means for synthesizing said information about said sale price acquired by said acquisition means with information about a usage fee for use of said communication medium; and

charging means for charging a user of said reception unit on the basis of synthesized information supplied by said synthesis means.

23. The charging apparatus according to claim 22, further comprising:

distribution means for dividing an amount of money paid by said user of said reception unit into a portion covering said sale price and another covering said usage fee.

24. A charging method for charging for digital content data transmitted from a transmission unit to a reception unit via a communication medium, comprising:

acquiring information about a sale price of said digital content data;

synthesizing said information about said sale price acquired in said acquisition step with information about a usage fee for use of said communication medium; and

charging a user of said reception unit on the basis of synthesized information supplied in said synthesis step.

25. A recording medium recording a computer-readable program for charging for digital content data transmitted from a transmission unit to a reception unit via a communication medium, said computer-readable program comprising:

acquiring information about a sale price of said digital content data;

synthesizing said information about said sale price acquired in said acquisition step with information about a usage fee for use of said communication medium; and

charging a user of said reception unit on the basis of synthesized information supplied in said synthesis step.

26. A charging apparatus for charging for digital content data transmitted from a transmission unit to a reception unit, comprising:

acquisition means for acquiring information about sale price of said digital content data:

synthesis means for synthesizing said information about sale price acquired by said acquisition means with information about a usage fee for use of information transmitted from said transmission unit; and

charging means for charging a user of said reception unit on the basis of the synthesized information supplied by said synthesis means.

27. The charging apparatus according to claim 26, further comprising:

distribution means for dividing an amount of money paid by said user of said reception unit into a portion covering said sale price and another covering said usage fee.

28. A charging method for charging for digital content data transmitted from a transmission unit to a reception unit, comprising the steps of:

acquiring information about sale price of said digital content data:

synthesizing said information about sale price acquired in said acquisition step with information about a usage fee for use of information transmitted from said transmission unit; and

charging a user of said reception unit on the basis of the synthesized information supplied in said synthesis step.

29. A recording medium recording a computer-readable program for charging for digital content data transmitted from a transmission unit to a reception unit, said computer-readable program comprising the steps of:

acquiring information about sale price of said digital content data:

synthesizing said information about sale price acquired in said acquisition step with information about a usage fee for use of information transmitted from said transmission unit; and

charging a user of said reception unit on the basis of the synthesized information supplied in said synthesis step.

30. A charging apparatus for charging for a predetermined service ordered from a first unit to a second unit via a network, comprising:

extraction means for extracting cost information from order information provided by said second unit to said first unit for ordering said predetermined service from said first unit to said second unit via said network; and

charging means for charging a user of said first unit on the basis of said cost information extracted by said extraction means.

31. The charging apparatus according to claim 30, wherein said extraction means extracts said cost information from said order information at a given point on said network between said first unit and said second unit inclusive.

32. A charging method for charging for a predetermined service ordered from a first unit to a second unit via a network, comprising the steps of:

extracting cost information from order information provided by said second unit to said first unit for ordering said predetermined service from said first unit to said second unit via said network; and

charging a user of said first unit on the basis of said cost information extracted in said extraction step.

33. A recording medium recording a computer-readable program for charging for a predetermined service ordered from a first unit to a second unit via a network, said computer-readable program comprising the steps of:

extracting cost information from order information for ordering said predetermined service from said first unit to said second unit via said network; and

charging a user of said first unit on the basis of said cost information extracted in said extraction step.

34. A providing apparatus for providing a predetermined service ordered from a unit via a network, comprising:

attachment means for attaching cost information about said predetermined service to order information for ordering said predetermined service by a user of said unit;

transmission means for transmitting said order information attached with said cost information to said unit via said network; and

acceptance means for accepting an order placed by said unit via said network on the basis of said order information transmitted by said transmission means.

35. The providing apparatus according to claim 34, further comprising:

instruction means for instructing said providing apparatus to provide the ordered service said unit when said order placed on the basis of said order information transmitted by said transmission means has been accepted by said acceptance means.

36. A providing method for providing a predetermined service ordered from a unit via a network,

comprising the steps of:

attaching cost information about said predetermined service to order information for ordering said predetermined service by a user of said unit;

transmitting said order information attached with said cost information to said unit via said network; and

accepting an order placed by said unit via said network on the basis of said order information transmitted in said transmission step.

37. A recording medium recording a computer-readable program for providing a predetermined service ordered from a unit via a network, said computer-readable program comprising the steps of:

attaching cost information about said predetermined service to order information for ordering said predetermined service by a user of said unit;

transmitting said order information attached with said cost information to said unit via said network; and

accepting an order placed by said unit via said network on the basis of said order information transmitted in said transmission step.